Government. After considering the memorandum and the dimension of the situation existing in the State, we decide to which State we can send the Central team. Those States which have not submitted any memoranda, how can the Central team go there ? (*Interruptions*).

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : Madam, I want a specific answer from the Minister about the Southern Grid. This can be done by connecting various rivers. This will help in solving the drought situation to a great extent. The Minister is not responding to it.

SHRI K.C. LENKA : I have said already that many valuable suggestions have been given by various members.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : The Government is spending crores of rupees every year on drought. Why can't they have a concrete programme right from Orissa from where the hon. Minister comes, to Kerala ?

SHRI K. C. LENKA : Many hon. Members have made valuable suggestions to improve the agriculture and irrigation system in the country. Those suggestions will be looked into. Madam, I can assure the House that we will make all efforts to control the drought and to meet the challenge. The challenge is not so great. The challenge is not out of control because in 1987 there was a drought and the Congress Government could control it and that drought existed in more than 11 States of the country. Now it is in 4 or 5 States. So that situation has not arisen which can be out of control. The Government is taking all sorts of measures to control the drought situation in the country and no stone will be left unturned to tackle the situation in the country so far as the Government of India is concerned.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN) : Now we will have the reply to the clarifications on the statement made by the Minister. .... (*Interruptions*) .... He is finished. .... (*Interruptions*) .... No ; many questions have been asked.

Shri Arjun Singh.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Modifications to the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986—contd.

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH) : Madam, I am very grateful to the hon. Members of the House for having taken very keen interest in the Policy document that was placed on the Table of the House and this will tesify for the fact that a large number of hon. Members not only reacted to the sepcific Policy formulations, but going even beyond that, some very valuable suggestions were made for improvement and also for tackling specific problems in the field of education. Madam, the Policy having been framed, the plan of action under the Policy now will have to be attended to, to bring it up to date with the new Policy formulations. I can assure the hon. Members of this House that their valuable suggestions made with regard to improvement in the sphere of Education shall be attended to fully in the preparation of the plan of action which ultimately will again come to this House sometime in the next Session.

There are specific points raised by the hon. Members which, I think, I should now address myself to. One was about the sanctity of the entire National Policy of Education formulated in 1988 by the late Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi. I was very distressed, Madam, to hear from an hon. Member that this Policy was a relic of our colonial past and we have not made any departure from the Policies that were pursued during the British colonial rule. In all humility, but firmly I would like to refute this insinuation. Let us beware that after we achieved independence, eminent people in the sphere of education, persons like Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, persons like Dr. Kothari, were given the responsibility to review and recommend changes in the policies and the programmes for education in an Independent India. I just can't imagine that anyone could even suggest that persons of such eminence adopted the colonial past as the framework for the education of a free India.

[Shri Arjun Singh]

Shri Rajiv Gandhi worked upon it, improved upon it, and updated it. The basic framework was not disturbed. Some modifications were made because modern technologies were called for. Some targets were set. For example, the Literacy Mission was launched. These are improvements which that Policy made, and to say that this is a relic of the colonial past is not only an act not borne out by facts but I think is self-defeating in intent and purpose. The other important general point which was made was : How are we going to take ahead the country in the sphere of universal elementary education programme? The House is aware that this programme forms the corner-stone of the entire education policy and alongwith National Literacy Mission we are quite confident that by the turn of this century our objectives, which, perhaps, should have been achieved by the middle of this decade, would certainly be achieved. Another important point which has been made is that like the National Literacy Mission, there should be a mission approach to the problem. Now, it has been decided that elementary education shall also be converted into a mission approach and, I am sure, the mission approach will make it more effective because it goes to the grass-roots, organises grass-root support and that support ultimately becomes the motive force for taking this plan onwards. The third point which has been raised was in respect of language policy by an hon. Member who does not happen to be here. It was a very basic issue and he was saying that the language policy of the Government had indirectly been changed by the document. I would like to assure the House that the language policy of the Government remains what it was as enunciated in 1968 and the assurance of the late Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, to the country in this respect shall not only be fully respected but shall be fully observed in every detail.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI (Tamil Nadu) : No, it is not correct.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN) : I don't know. He is not yielding. The clarifications have been sought. Let him complete. Please, let him complete.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI : Of course, I have raised the issue.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN) : Let him complete.

SHRI ARJUN SINGH : Madam, there was a suggestion about classical languages also as to what our approach is to the development of classical languages, Sanskrit and other languages. I would like to inform the House that it was thought necessary that our efforts to promote classical languages needed to get an impetus and, therefore, it has been decided—it is mentioned in the policy document also—that we should set up an autonomous commission for promoting Sanskrit, Pali and other classical languages of the country. It will get the required attention and also, as far as possible, the resources for the same. Another general point that was mentioned by all Members was lack of resources, which appears to be evident, to conduct our educational programmes. This is a matter in which I fully share the concern of this hon. House. I may inform the House that this concern is not only shared but, with whatever is within my reach, I am trying to see that resources for education are augmented. I am happy to inform the House that the hon. Prime Minister has reacted very favourably to our request in this regard. I am sure, as soon as there is any augmentation in the Eighth Plan resources, education will be the first to benefit from that. Then there are some specific points which have been raised. I will touch on those points. But I don't want to take much of your time if hon. Members so desire because some Members have raised a number of points. I would have no hesitation in writing to the hon. Members directly on the points that they have raised so that there could be a piece of document which they can use for further helping the department to go ahead with its plans. But still I will

refer to one or two points because very senior Members have made those points. Dr. Ratnakar Pandey has mentioned the question of donation and capitation fees. We have been trying to influence the State Governments to come out strongly against this practice. Some State Governments have reacted favourably and they are doing something. Perhaps there is some difficulty in some places but we are still pursuing it. I am sure some positive results will ensure. The second point made by him was about the establishment of an International Hindi University. Madam, all the languages in India have a very rich past. Naturally the demand for encouraging their growth is a demand which we can well understand. There are certain universities in this country relating to certain important Indian languages. The request for a Hindi University has also been made for a long time. We would have the entire matter examined in the UGC. I would like to assure Dr. Pandey and this House that as soon as the modalities are worked out, I think, there should be no difficulty in acceeding to this demand which has been made in this country. There was a pointed reference by Shri Ram Nareshji about the drop-outs. Drop-outs, as you know, Madam, is one of the perennial problem that has been dogging all educational programmes in the country, not because of any specific reason but for the very simple fact of our social and economic life. To the extent possible this problem has been met but still remains in some very large areas. For this various steps are being contemplated. Making provision of education at elementary stage free of tuition fee, provision of primary schools within one kilometre walking distance with a population of 300 in the case of SC and ST, habitations with a population of 200, provision of incentievs such as free uniform, free text-books, midday meal, improvement of physical facilities, primary schools, provision of a part-time non-formal education for school drop-outs. I am sure a concerted effort in all these aspects will affect the drop-out rate. I am sure the concern expressed by Shri Ram Nareshji will be met. A point was raised about the Navodaya Vidyalaya. Madam, there is a lot of misconception about this which the policy document very clearly allays and meets. But still I would like to say one thing. The Navodaya Vidyalaya Scheme is not an elitist scheme meant for the privileged or certain sections of the people. If I may say so without any fear of contradiction, this scheme was a gift of Rajivji to the under-privileged of this nation. We have seen that education at a very high level, at high costs is available to the affluent sections of the people in this country. What he did through this scheme was that the same education should be made available at State cost to the under-privileged and poor people of this country. This is the essence of the Navodaya Vidyalaya Scheme. To say that it is elitist is either out of total ignorance or perhaps of some other reason. I don't say. The admission in these schools show 40 per cent students of the Navodaya Vidyalayas come from families living below the poverty line, 60 per cent are first generation learners, 30 per cent are girls, 19 per cent are SCs, 11 per cent are STs. Not only this. A noble thing which was introduced in this school system was that a certain section of the students from north, south, east, west will become inter-transferable. I have seen students from the south studying in Madhya Pradesh and from Madhya Pradesh in Kerala. And there is absolutely no problem for these students to adjust themselves to the changed circumstances in the States where they are studying. This is an approach to further the national integration through the school system. Therefore, I would suggest that this scheme should be allowed to grow; the shortcomings may be removed; whatever more is required should be demanded. But the intrinsic value of the educational system of this country should not be belittled. This is my humble request to the hon. Members of the House .... (*Interruptions*)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN) : Let him finish. You can ask later .... (*Interruptions*) Mr. Poddar, after he finishes, you can ask.

DR. R.K. PODDAR (West Bengal) : If he allows me, I would like to ask one thing.

SHRI ARJUN SINGH : Yes please go ahead.

DR. R.K. PODDAR : Could you please say the percentage of the total number of students going to the Navodaya Schools ?

SHRI ARJUN SINGH : All this information, as I have said, I will supply to the hon. Members for their use and also for their active consideration. I consider every hon. Member of this House as a very effective and active instrument in the promotion of education in this country because there is no politics and there is no division; the concern of every Member is the concern for the country and the education is the common national concern, not a party or partisan concern.

The other important point raised by Smt. Renuka Chowdhury was that a policy should be evolved to make a child aware of the environment and environmental care. Madam, para 8.5 of the National Policy on Education is specifically on education and environment and this has been taken care of. She has also said that a two-year military service should be made compulsory for all students. This is a matter which requires an in-depth study and perhaps will have to be worked upon by many other Departments of this Government and perhaps a national debate on it is required. But I am personally not averse to it. If it can be made possible, I think, this will be a step in the right direction. But I alone cannot be laying down the law or the policy on this matter.

Shri Viren J. Shah had mentioned about any curriculum being designed to train teachers in vocational education. I would like to inform the House that training of teachers is part of the vocationalisation of education and efforts are being made to train teachers to be available for the vocational guidance course. The other thing which he mentioned was about the money effectively spent on education. This again is a matter which has to be dealt with in depth and the Action Programme will make provisions for this. And when the Action Programme comes before this House for discussion, I am sure that it will be effectively enhanced by the suggestions that have been made here.

One specific question was raised about Operation Blackboard, whether it is sufficient or it is now being scaled down. I would like to inform the House that the policy document placed before this House, in fact, specifically provides for increasing the dimension of Operation Blackboard—from two teachers, we will have three teachers and from two class rooms, to three class rooms. Therefore, the question of scaling down Operation Blackboard does not arise. In fact, the policy provides for enhancing the operation and the dimension of this programme.

Madam, these are the important points which were raised that day and as I have already said, to the specific suggestions or specific pointed questions that were raised, I will send written replies to the hon. Members and if there is any scope still left, I would be available to the hon. Members for any kind of explanation. And I am very grateful to all the Members who reacted on the policy document. Their reaction will only go to further the effectiveness of this policy. This is a national policy which policy will, I am sure, help in transforming our nation into a modern country.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI : Madam, the other day, when I was speaking on this Policy, I had told very clearly that knowledge of Hindi was a must to get a job in the Kendriya Vidyalayas and that the policy pursued by the Kendriya Vidyalayas went against the assurance given by the late Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. Then I requested the honourable Minister to look into and rectify this.

Secondly, on the same day, the honourable Member, Dr. Ratnakar Pandey, made a request for the establishment of a Hindi University or a University to develop the Hindi language. At that time, I told that if any Hindi-speaking State established a

University for the development of the Hindi language, that would be a different matter altogether, but, as far as the Central Government was concerned, it was a Government for all the language people. Therefore, if the Government wants to establish a University separately for Hindi, then there should be some provision made to develop all the other Indian languages also or they must create one University each for each language. Even though I had made that request, the honourable Minister has been very sympathetic to the request of Dr. Pandey only and now he says that they are considering the question of establishing a Hindi University. It clearly shows that the Central Government is biased against the other Indian languages .... (*Interruptions*) .... Otherwise, let them also say that they will work for the development of the other Indian language also .... (*Interruptions*) ....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN) : You have to seek clarificaions only .... (*Interruptions*) ....

SHRI MISA R. GANESAN (Tamil Nadu) : Kindly allow him. It is not just a clarification .... (*Interruptions*) ....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): Mr Ganasan, you please sit down. Let me deal with Mr. Viduthalai Virumbi ....(*Interruptions*) .... You please sit down, Mr. Ganesan .... (*Interruptions*) ....

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI : Madam, this was the basic issue .... (*Interruptions*) .... and it is because of this that the USSR disintegrated ....(*Interruptions*) .... I only want that this should not happen here in India .... (*Interruptions*) .... I am saying this only in the interest of national integration and in the interest of the unity of this country .... (*Interruptions*) ....

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY (Pondichherry): We have a Tamil University also .... (*Interruptions*) ....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): Mr. Viduthalai Virumbi, please sit down .... (*Interruptions*) ....

SHRI ARJUN SINGH: I am grateful to the honourable Member .... (*Interruptions*) ....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): Just a minute. Let him answer .... (*Interruptions*) .... Let the Minister answer .... (*Interruptions*) .... Mr. Viduthalai Virumbi, let the minister answer .... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI MOTURU HANUMANTHA RAO. (Andhra Pradesh) : Madam, this is a serious question .... (*Interruptions*) ....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): You please sit down. How long can we go on like this ? .... (*Interruptions*) ....

SHRI MOTURU HANUMANTHA RAO : Madam, it is a serious question that I am raising .... (*Interruptions*) ....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN) : You please sit down, Mr. Rao. He is going to answer that .... (*Interruptions*) ....

SHRI ARJUN SINGH : Madam, I have heard enough .... (*Interruptions*) ....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN) : All of you, please sit down. Let the Minister answer .... (*Interruptions*) ....

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV (Maharashtra) : Madam, I am on a point of order .... (*Interruptions*) ..

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN) : I do not allow .... (*Interruptions*) .... I am not allowing. .... (*Interruptions*) .... I have the discretion not to allow. Please sit down .... (*Interruptions*) ....

SHRI MOTURU HANUMANTHA RAO : Madam, ... (*Interruptions*) ....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN) : The clarifications are over. You please sit down, Mr. Rao .... (*Interruptions*) .... Mr. Jadhav, you please sit down. Let the Minister reply .... (*Interruptions*) ....

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV : He is ready to yield .... (*Interruptions*) ....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN) : No. If I allow you, I will have to allow everybody. So, kindly co-operate with the Chair. Please sit down .... (*Interruptions*) .... Mr. Rao, please sit down. I am not allowing anything. Kindly sit down .... (*Interruptions*) .... We cannot keep on going from clarifications to clarifications. Please sit down. Let him answer. We have got other items of busines also .... (*Interruptions*) ....

SHRI MOTURU HANUMANTHA RAO : He has assured as something and it is contrary to what has been said earlier .... (*Interruptions*) ....

SHRI ARJUN SINGH : I will reply to you. Madam, I would like to state very categorically that in the 1968 Language Policy, the Language Policy enunciated then, there is no change. The asurance given by the late Prime Minister, Jawaharlalji, will be ensured and respected and there is no question of any deviation from that. So far as the promotion of languages is concerned, well, there are Universities for other languages and if Hindi also wants to be there, what is the harm ? .... (*Interruptions*) ....

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI : What I was saying was .... (*Interruptions*) ....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN) : No. I am not allowing anything .... (*Interruptions*) .... Now, the Minister, Mr. Rajesh Pilot, to make a statement .... (*Interruptions*) .... Nothing will go on record except what the Minister says. Yes, Mr. Pilot .... (*Interruptions*) ....

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Provision of Group Dialling Facility in Rural Areas and Rationalisation of Tariff for Local and Trunk Calls.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAJESH PILOT) : Madam Vice-Chairman,

I wish to keep the House informed of two important measures that the Government is taking relating to provision of Group Dialling facility in rural areas and consequential rationalisation of tariff for local calls and Trunk calls (both manual and subscriber dialled).

Members are aware that Government have taken steps to accelerate provision of of telecommunications facility in the rural areas. The number of exchanges in rural areas today stands at more than 15,000 against about 8000 in the year 1982. The programme of the Government to connect all the Gram Panchayats numbering approximately 2,20, 000 by 31st March, 1995 is also likely to create more demand for telecommunications facility in the rural areas.

These developments have resulted in a consequential demand from the rural community for providing them group-dialling facility. The rural subscribers have also started demanding STD service. Provision of STD in all rural exchanges will require implementation over a period of time. As a first step, the Government have decided to introduce group-dialling facility in the rural areas. This also calls for rationalisation of charging methods for calls within the group dialling area as also the long distance area.

One of the technical requirements for linking all the exchanges in the country to the National STD is the concept of short distance charging areas (SDCA) which gives a unique identity for numbering and charging with reference to other short distance charging areas. Thus formation of SDCA will enable rapid expansion of STD to rural areas.